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ABSTRACT

Position papers and reports from workshop groups in this proceedings are based on the theme of articulation goals for technical communication programs. Papers in the proceedings included two position papers prepared to initiate discussion: "Education or Training? Issues for Certificate Programs in Technical Communication" (Henrietta Nickels Shirk); "Establishing Standards for Graduate Programs in Scientific and Technical Communication" (Billie J. Wahlstrom); the president's address: "Taking Control of How Others View Us" (Marilyn Schauer Samuels); and four reports from workshop groups: "Service Programs" (Donald Cunningham); "Certificate Programs (Katherine E. Staples); "Undergraduate Programs" (Mary Lay); and "Graduate Programs" (Carol S. Lipson). The proceedings also present the agenda for the meeting, and minutes of the annual business meeting. Appendixes list pre-registered conferees; annual meetings, sites, and dates; and officers for 1988. (RS)

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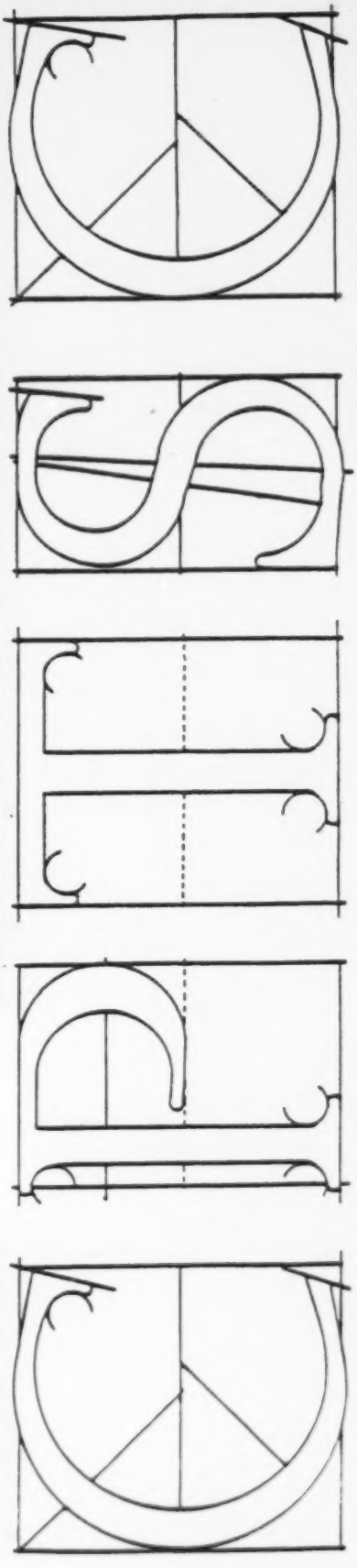
Proceedings

1988



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PROCEEDINGS

The Council for Programs In Technical and Scientific Communication

1988
15th Annual Meeting

Minneapolis, Minnesota
October 19-21, 1988

Laurie Schultz Hayes,
Editor

Jerome Norlander,
Editorial assistant

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Agenda

CPTSC
15th Annual Meeting
Radisson University Hotel
Minneapolis, Minnesota
October 19-21, 1988

Host: Department of Rhetoric
University of Minnesota

1988 Theme: Articulating Goals for Technical Communication Programs

Wednesday, October 19

7:00 P.M. Welcome Reception, Registration, and Poster Session at the Radisson

Thursday, October 20

Breakfast (on your own)

8:30 A.M. Greetings:
Victoria Mikelonis for Host Committee
Introduction: *Marilyn Schauer Samuels*, CPTSC President

Morning session consists of 4 speakers who will address interests and concerns in establishing and reaching goals in programs.

9:00 A.M. Service Programs: *Virginia Book*
9:15 A.M. Discussion

9:45 A.M. Certificate Programs: *Henrietta Shirk*
10:00 A.M. Discussion

11:00 A.M. Undergraduate Programs: *Victoria Mikelonis*
11:15 A.M. Discussion

11:30 A.M. Graduate Programs: *Billie Wahlstrom*
11:45 A.M. Discussion

12:00–2:00 P.M. Lunch

Group Lunch: Conference will break up into four interest groups: Service Programs; Certificate Programs; Undergraduate Programs; Graduate Programs. Each group will discuss preceding speakers' ideas during lunch.

President's Address: *Marilyn Schauer Samuels*; "Technical Writing, Administration, and Faculty: How Others View Us"

2:00–4:00 P.M. Four separate workshops

Each participant will choose a workshop to attend. The facilitator will present problems for the group based on the questions and problems received before the conference, and will lead the discussion. The summary reporter will present the group's findings to the general conference on Friday.

1. Service Programs
   Facilitator: *Laura Casari*
   Summary Reporter: *Don Cunningham*
2. Certificate Programs
   Facilitator: *Henrietta Shirk*
   Summary Reporter: *Katherine Staples*
3. Undergraduate Programs
   Facilitator: *Gloria Jaffe*
   Summary Reporter: *Mary Lay*
4. Graduate Programs
   Facilitator: *Marilyn Schauer Samuels*
   Summary Reporter: *Carol Lipson*

7:00 P.M. Reception

7:30 P.M. Dinner in honor of Thomas Pearsall

Friday, October 21

Breakfast (on your own)

9:00–10:15 A.M. **CPTSC** Annual Business Meeting

1. Minutes
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Old Business
   - Reports
   - Constitution revision
   - Election
   - Next year's meeting
4. New business

Workshop Summaries

10:30 A.M. 1. Service Programs: *Don Cunningham*
10:45 A.M. Discussion

11:00 A.M. 2. Certificate Programs: *Katherine Staples*
11:15 A.M. Discussion

12:30-1:30 P.M. Lunch (on your own)

1:30 P.M. 3. Undergraduate Programs: *Mary Lay*
1:45 P.M. Discussion

2:00 P.M. 4. Graduate Programs: *Carol Lipson*
2:15 P.M. Discussion

3:00 P.M. Farewell until next year

Education or Training? Issues for Certificate Programs In Technical Communication

Henrietta Nickels Shirk

Assistant Professor, Department of English,
Northeastern University

What should be the goals and content of a good undergraduate or graduate certificate program in technical communication? This question raises a host of perplexing philosophical issues ranging from the theoretical to the practical. My goal is to articulate the issues, rather than to provide answers to the numerous questions raised by them. Hopefully, this exploration of questions about the background, content, reputation, and the meaning of certification will provide a framework in which we can begin to address the criteria appropriate for successful certificate programs.

Background:

I suspect that certificate programs in technical communication came into existence before degree programs. The realities of academic hierarchies and politics often make it easier to establish certificate programs than full- fledged degree programs. Also, some certificate programs (such as one at Northeastern University) have themselves spawned degree programs, as well as become optional parts of such programs.

A brief perusal of the CPTSC/STC 1985 publication on "Academic Programs in Technical Communication" reveals the existence of sixteen institutions with certificate programs [1]. These programs range from undergraduate to graduate, with some required as prerequisites for undergraduate minors in technical communication. There are probably at least double

or triple this number of certificate programs in existence today. I am aware of at least three certificate programs in the Boston area which are not included in the 1985 CPTSC/STC publication.

The question of how various certificate programs came into existence is an important one, for the answers to it may point to evolutionary processes that will enable us to predict the futures of such programs. Why are some certificate programs organized at the undergraduate level and others at the graduate level? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each kind of certificate? Is one kind of student (undergraduate or graduate) a better candidate for training in technical communication? Do changes (technological and human) in the technical communication field influence the successes or failures of such programs to meet the needs of their students? We must answer such questions for a continuing and evolving understanding of the place of certificate programs in our educational systems.

Content:

In addition to being easier to establish than most degree programs, and perhaps a more important factor, certificate programs seem to have come into existence because of special needs for well-qualified technical communicators. Particular industries within specific locales have had requirements for technical communicators, and they have frequently been the impetus for academic institutions to create certificate programs.

In addition to providing program advisory boards, local industry is also a rich source for student internships. The CPTSC/STC catalog of programs mentioned earlier attests to the frequency in which certificate programs are involved in internships. Several institutions also describe the working relationships which exist between the institution and the community. An example from the New York Institute of Technology: "Faculty and students have cordial working relations with the many employers of technical writers in the large high-tech corridors near NYIT's campuses" [1, p. 71]. And North Texas State University boasts a 100 percent placement rate for its graduates: "Firms in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area recognize the value of hiring new employees with strong communications skills" [1, p. 75]. These are indeed symbiotic relationships.

Although such mutually supportive relationships can be beneficial and rewarding, we must continually ask questions related to the content of our programs. Who should teach in

these programs? Should our instructors have primarily academic backgrounds, should they be current practitioners in the field, or should the "ideal" program have a group of instructors who represent some combination of these different sets of skills? If there are industry advisory boards for our programs, do they recommend course content rather than dictate it? And is this course content balanced with the application of sound theory and effective teaching strategies? Are our certificate programs too focused in their content and therefore on the edge of being parochial? While graduates may meet the immediate job needs of local industries, will they also be equally successful in positions as technical communicators in other parts of the country? What are the strengths and weaknesses of a certificate program's content in terms of the needs within the technical communication profession at large?

Unless we periodically contemplate questions such as these, our certificate programs are in danger of professional parochialism, in spite of successful local placement rates.

Reputation:

There is confusion surrounding the perception of the academic qualities of certificate programs in technical communication. This confusion is most evident in geographic locales where there are a myriad of different kinds of academic programs available in the field, although I suspect that it happens nationwide. Because Northeastern University has two certificate programs (undergraduate and graduate) and a master's degree program in technical communication, I frequently experience evidence of this confusion on the part of hiring companies. It is not unusual for me to receive telephone calls from managers who are interviewing students from all our programs, inquiring about the difference among them. In truth, I cannot always affirm that a graduate from our master's program is better prepared for a particular job than a graduate from one of our certificate programs. In fact, many of our graduates from the certificate programs obtain more challenging and higher-paying jobs than those graduates with master's degrees. We need to examine the differences between certificate programs and graduate programs.

Many of the perception problems surrounding our academic programs in technical communication are self-created. Because there are no existing standards or criteria for such programs that are uniform from institution to institution, we have no way of assuring academic consistency. For example, some certificate programs require only one semester or one quarter of study, while others require a full two years. Some certificate programs

offer grades, while others are offered on a pass/fail basis or are considered as a kind of add-on requirement to existing degree programs.

The content of many certificate programs is likewise uneven, with some a mere course or two beyond or in addition to another degree, and others equal to or surpassing many master's programs. The ultimate question is whether such diversity is healthy for the profession, or whether we render a disservice to our graduates by not "authenticating" them in terms of standard academic fare. Graduates of most degree programs can be expected to have been exposed to a common body of theoretical and applied research, depending on their field. The great diversity in the content of our certificate programs makes such expectations impossible--for both our students and their eventual employers. We must decide whether diversity is a strength to be built on or a weakness that is eroding the public perception of all certificate programs.

Certification:

All these issues finally focus on the most important question of all: What is it that we are "certifying" in our certificate programs, or what does it mean "to certify" one of our graduates? The issue is that of general versus specialized education, or whether we should educate or train our students . Or, to put it another way, do today's technical communicators need specific training based on predictable needs, or do they need an education that will prepare them to adapt to any need they may encounter in the future?

Virgil Peterson of the RAND Corporation addressed this matter in a paper ("Technical Writers: Educated or Trained?") which he presented in 1965 before the Society of Technical Writers and Publishers (a prototype of the STC). Although many of his comments about technology are now dated, his views on education are timeless. He tells us that training in the use of new tools can wait for the future, but the basic discipline of the technical communicator is "a product of education" [2, p. 4]. Subject matter and tools will change, but (as Peterson tells us) "if the basic communication discipline is under control, the specialized discipline can be acquired with relative ease" [2, p. 5].

While Peterson's comments raise questions about certificate programs that are perhaps too specific in content, they also direct our attention to the major concern of us all--what is to be the content of a "basic communications discipline." It is a well-known fact that engineers who have been "trained" often rapidly become obsolete in their professions and

must therefore return to academia for further training on current technologies in their fields. If this "retread image" is not to be the fate of our certificate program graduates, we must give them skills and attitudes that will take them beyond today's current technologies so that they can successfully adapt to those of tomorrow.

Finally, we need to become more critical of the "certification" factor explicit in our programs. Are we giving students certificates to attest to the fact that they have successfully completed a certain number of courses that now qualify them as technical communicators? Is a certificate merely a finishing veneer added onto other disciplines, or is it an assurance that students have met an educational standard and that they have the "basics" to be successful in their chosen profession? Can we assure that our graduates have not just a "trade school" certificate of their training as technical communicators, but also an education that has been directed toward the whole person?

I often have graduate students who are already employed as technical communicators tell me that they are returning to study for their certificates because the certificate will help to "authenticate" them in their profession. While such motives may be an expedient reason for obtaining a certificate in technical communication, they ignore what should be the real reason for an education. I suggest that we owe our students more than certification--we owe an education in the profession of technical communication. Our certificate programs will not be truly successful until we are able to direct them toward the whole student and not just a segment of the individual's talent.

References

1. Kelley, Patrick M., et al. Academic Programs in Technical Communication: A Cooperative Effort by the Society for Technical Communication and the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication. Washington, D.C.: Society for Technical Communication, 1985.

2. Peterson, Virgil. Technical Writers: Educated or Trained? (From the RAND Corporation Collection.) New York: Annual Convention of the Society of Technical Writers and Publishers, May 20-22, 1965.

Establishing Standards For Graduate Programs In Scientific and Technical Communication

Billie J. Wahlstrom

Michigan Technological University

Surveys of programs in well-established disciplinary fields reveal relatively consistent patterns of what constitutes undergraduate and graduate work. We have a good idea, for example, what a BA or MA student in English will have studied.[1] Because scientific and technical communication is such a young discipline, however, there is as yet no consensus on what distinguishes undergraduate and graduate curricula, and, consequently, no good way of predicting with certainty what a graduate of a bachelor's or a master's program will know. Indeed, currently, there is no way of determining conclusively what constitutes a *typical* STC graduate curriculum. Although some surveys have been done, we find that what is offered in one school as an undergraduate course appears as a graduate course at another. Also, we seem not to have really resolved the issue of whether *technical communication* and *technical writing* degrees are the same thing or whether they are different, and if different, exactly how.

Although such confusion is to be expected in a new field, we have reached the stage, I think, where we need to do three things: 1) differentiate between undergraduate and graduate curricula, 2) determine appropriate expectations for bachelor's, master's, and ultimately doctoral, students; and 3) establish criteria for evaluating programs.

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[1]Huber. Bettina J., and Art Young. "Report on the 1983-84 Survey of English Sample." *ADE Bulletin* 84 (1986): 40-70.

I have heard in the last several years the argument that it is too early to begin evaluating our programs, that to do so prematurely will place stifling restrictions on our curricular problem solving. Although I think that the imposition of a set of uniform strictures on all programs would be disastrous, I don't think we can wait any longer to establish basic evaluation criteria. If we do not act, and perhaps even if we do, we will continue to see the development of opportunistic but ill-conceived programs, the imposition on academic programs of ranking systems developed by the corporate world (and the corporate world has already begun this process), and a growing number of disgruntled students for whom graduate school is not what it might be.

The need for scientific and technical communicators is acute, and this very need is responsible for problems with the quality of STC programs on both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Currently, nearly 30,000 people hold technical writing and editing jobs in the U.S. and thousands more hold jobs in video, public relations, and marketing which require expertise in technical communication. The Department of Labor forecast for the year 2000 calls for a 40.2 percent increase in the number of writers employed in the public relations disciplines and a 34.1 percent increase in the number of writers, editors, and technical writers employed by other industries.

The shortage of skilled practitioners and the promise of heavy enrollments has occasioned in the academy a scramble to set up programs. The explosion in the number of STC programs is astounding. Approximately 10 years ago, no institution had a comprehensive graduate program in STC. Today, fewer than a score of universities have had more than a decade of experience offering technical communication or technical writing programs, even at the undergraduate level. In 1986-87, however, more than 60 schools were positioning themselves to take advantage of the market demand for STCs. Nearly 30 of these schools offer master's degrees in technical writing, technical journalism, or in technical communication, and several schools, including mine, are well along in the development of Ph.D. programs.

Before we can begin evaluating these programs, however, we have to be able to distinguish between our expectations for the graduates of bachelors and masters programs. If we cannot make any distinction between undergrads and grads, then we have nothing upon which to base the design of graduate curricula. We should, I believe, be able to make that distinction. Graduates of bachelors programs and graduates of masters programs should

serve different roles in the work environment. To put the distinction too simply, perhaps, I would argue that undergraduate majors are needed to do the day-to-day work required by companies. Graduate majors are needed both to do that work and also to provide critiques of current practices, as well as to help companies prepare for and make use of new communication technologies.

Clearly, then, undergraduate programs must turn out students who have the skills necessary to help business and industry meet their information needs. Such programs must produce students with good writing, editing, and speaking skills; students who know the fundamentals of audience analysis, persuasion, teaching, and communication law; students who understand how to collaborate with others in different fields, and who know both how to use and how to gauge the impact of state-of-the-art communication technologies.

Yet, STC is not a vocational curriculum, and undergraduate programs must meet the academy's requirement for intellectual rigor. Such programs must have faculty who are active scholars and who bring current theory to bear in even what appears to be the most skills-oriented classes. Print lab or publications management courses, for example, which do not explore something like the issues as the implications of the digital revolution or the impact of desktop publishing should not be acceptable. Equally unacceptable, however, should be programs that teach only theory and do not require that their graduates be able to produce error-free projects in a variety of media on state-of-the-art equipment.

Students who graduate from well-designed undergraduate STC programs should be adequately prepared to be competitive in the field for the rest of their careers. After serving an appropriate apprenticeship in business, these graduates might well become managers and leaders.

If students with undergraduate degrees can move into leadership positions, one might ask if there truly is a need for graduate education in STC. Maybe these people should get an MBA, for example, rather than a master's in STC. Obviously, as a director of a graduate program, I don't agree. I believe there is something special to be learned on the graduate level in this discipline.

If graduate programs in STC balance the demands of the academy and those of business carefully, we can meet our obligation to both worlds by producing people able to enter the work world as skilled practitioners and also as independent thinkers, people who can argue

convincingly for a change, who can pinpoint the need for research and conduct it, and who can step into leadership positions quickly without disrupting on-going projects and antagonizing others.

One way to create people able to function in this way is to work theory into the design of the curriculum in a way different from the way theory is used in an undergraduate program. For undergraduates, theory can remain, by and large, implicit. In graduate education, theory must be brought to the fore so that students can bring to bear upon it historical and critical perspectives they are developing. If we teach undergraduates to do multiple drafts of their writing and to rely on peer critiques as a means of polishing that writing, we teach graduate students both how the techniques of revision and critiquing were developed and how they are related to social constructivist theories and research on discourse communities. Such theoretical background will manifest itself in many practical ways as graduate students apply these theories to issues of usability, building customer confidence, and corporate training.

Undergraduate education should provide students with a set of skills and enough theoretical background to use those skills well and ethically. It should also teach students the problem-solving methods that will enable them to grow on the job. Graduate students must continue to polish their skills and learn new ones, but graduate programs should also require students to apply theory with discrimination and to design and carry out research on their own. If the undergraduate can help a company meet its day-to-day obligations, the graduate should help the company articulate and shape its future.

Convincing companies that they need people with critical and research background when what they think they want is more skilled practitioners is one of the critical battles facing graduate program designers today. (The other is finding faculty to teach our programs.) Corporate perceptions of graduate students is that they have expectations which are "too high" and so they will be disappointed by the jobs they are offered or that they will "disrupt" the day-to-day efforts of a company by their attempts to introduce new ideas and ways of doing things.

In order to prepare graduate students to make a substantial contribution to their employers right from the beginning, graduate programs must strike a balance between flexibility and rigor. They have to be flexible in recognizing and accounting for the diversity of student backgrounds. They cannot be flexible, however, when it comes to waiving requirements

of letting students substitute undergraduate courses for graduate ones. They may well require all students to take a substantial core curriculum to insure their solid grounding in the fundamentals of written, visual, and oral communication, without which they could not lay claim to having done advanced study in this field. But theory alone is not enough on the master's level. Students in these programs must be competent communicators, familiar with current technologies, and capable of turning out high-quality projects. In many programs, the fact that many graduate students teach is also an added benefit, because these students develop interpersonal and instructional skills not shared by undergraduate majors.

Currently much graduate education in STC fails to meet these basic requirements. Too often what are called graduate programs are undergraduate programs in disguise. As a consequence, STC students who have received sound training as undergraduates find themselves bored and frustrated in programs which dilute four years of undergraduate education and cram it into twelve months. In these programs, students without an STC background cannot hope to develop either the skills or the critical distance necessary to prepare them to be technical communicators at a graduate level.

In order to guarantee that all graduates be trained in both skills and in theory, graduate programs must set realistic goals for in-coming non-STC majors. They must have tough entrance requirements which screen out people with weak communication skills. They must require that non-STC majors develop both the skills and the critical distance associated with understanding theory formation. They have to be realistic in encouraging non-STC graduates to extend their graduate program an extra term or two. Lastly, they must require that all students pass thorough examinations on their course work, research, and projects before they are allowed to graduate.

If those of us who are program administrators establish rigorous requirements for our graduate programs, our graduates will prove their value. They will carry out research on technical and scientific discourse, make critical decisions about communication systems and document design for the companies at which they work, and they will join other STCs who have worked their way up through the ranks in serving as communication leaders. If we fail to distinguish between the functions of undergraduate and graduate education, we cannot hope to develop as an academic discipline, and we mislead industry and our students about the abilities and value of people with advanced degrees in this field.

President's Address

Taking Control of How Others View Us

Marilyn Schauer Samuels

I am borrowing part of your lunch hour discussion time today because I want to share my beliefs and dreams with you for the future of CPTSC. I believe that at this moment in time, CPTSC has the opportunity to accept a great challenge -- a challenge to analyze and understand how we and the profession we represent see ourselves in relation to others and how we are seen by others; a challenge to take control of our image, change it where necessary, and publicize, advertise that image to others who need to know.

Who are these "others"? They include others in our own departments, other departments and divisions in our own institutions, our institution's administrators, professional organizations such as NCTE, 4C's, and STC; professional journals; public and private granting agencies, the business community; and the general public.

I will begin by telling you a story. Once upon a time, there were a grandfather, a little boy, and a donkey. They were traveling to a village several villages away from where they lived to sell their wares. Early in the morning, they started off with the donkey carrying their bundles and the boy and the old man walking alongside him. Along the road they met a fellow traveler. "Foolish old man!: he cried. "Why are you walking when you both could be riding?" Both the old man and the boy

felt this made sense, so they both got on the donkey. In the next village, they met a farmer. "I don't understand how you could be so inconsiderate of that poor overburdened donkey," he said. "If you overburden him on the way there, how will he have the strength to get you back home?" The boy and the old man had to admit that the farmer made sense, so once again they both got off the donkey and continued on their way. In a little while, they met an old woman. "Grandfather!," she shouted. "Why let that poor little boy walk all this way on his tiny legs when you have a donkey he could ride." What must I be thinking!" said the old man and lifted the boy onto the donkey. But one village before their destination a burgher stopped them. "I say, young man. Have you no respect for age? Do you ride a donkey while you're old, bent grandfather stumbles along the road? This opinion, too, they had to admit made sense. But what to do now. No matter who rode the donkey, someone was dissatisfied; if no one road the donkey someone was dissatisfied. Only one option remained. They heaved the donkey up on their backs only to be greeted with jeers and laughter when they reached their destination huffing and puffing beneath the weight of the donkey and his pack.

The moral of the story? If you try to adapt to everyone else's version of what you should be, you wind up a fool in everyone's eyes. If you choose your own approach and have the courage of your convictions, you will at the very least please yourself and eventually win other people over to your decisive, clear, and well-documented sense of self.

I submit to you that Technical Writing and Technical Communication programs, are carrying too many donkeys on their backs. Through aggressive decision-making, cooperative project planning, and publicity campaigns, let us once and for all get those asses off!

Who and what are these donkeys?

Generally-speaking, they represent two extremes of behavior that are becoming endemic to our programs, administrators, and teachers.

At the one extreme, is a behavior that borrowing from the field of psychology, I will call co-dependency. The co-dependent personality reacts to the needs, opinions, and demands of others as he/she perceives them. Co-dependent people have no self-image independent of the acceptance and approval they can elicit from others. They are cameleons whose color changes to suit the schemes and tones of the environment they happen to be adapting to at the time. Co-dependent personalities tend to cluster in caretaking and service professions such as nursing, psychiatry, and teaching technical communication.

There is a natural tendency in others to see technical communication courses as service courses. They enable students to communicate the content of other "real" subjects; they have no independent subject content, theoretical base, or research activity of their own. As for programs offering degrees to people intending to be technical communicators or teachers of

technical communication, these too are perceived as co-dependent because the business world views Technical Communication as a service profession. Technical Publication departments, and individual writers and graphic artists enable the communication of designs, products, instructions. They are instrumental in content-distribution of things they themselves have not initiated or designed. As an organization, we need to find ways of using and describing the positives aspects of a service-oriented field of study, while at the same time enriching and publicizing the research and content-oriented aspects -- the non-service characteristics of our field.

The other general donkey that we are burdened with is ironically the exact opposite extreme. For while we are pushed and pulled by others whom we feel we must accommodate, we are at the same time becoming <u>self-involved and distancing ourselves from the persons and groups whose better understanding of us would be mutually beneficial</u>.

For example, I think it is wonderful that we now have three or four journals devoted exclusively to the special concerns of Techinical Communication. I think CPTSC has taken a big step in the right direction in creating a bi-annual newsletter to increase the opportunity for program directors to talk to each other between meetings. But I am concerned about a possible by-product of the increase in vehicles for sharing theory and practice with each other -- I'm concerned about a marked decrease in our desire to talk to others outside our exclusive club. It is getting rare to see an article on Technical Communication in

College English. True, the new editor is trying to orient this journal more toward literary criticism, but that doesn't necessarily mean we have nothing to contribute. CCC focuses more and more on literacy, pluralism, and the sociocultural and political concerns of composition. Either none of us are writing articles that demonstrate the relationship of these other hot issues to Technical Communication, or else we are submitting them and they are not being accepted. Either way it is to everyone's advantage for us to communicate in print in journals of related areas of study. Eventually, I'd like to see reports of our research, especially interdisciplinary research, appearing in such journals as PMLA, Philosophy and Rhetoric, 18th Century Studies, etc., as well as in journals devoted to anthropology, history, philosophy, physics and computers. But at the very least, let us not continue to lose ground with any journals whose general concern is the use and appreciation of language.

Being able to pat each other on the back, to appreciate and honor our individual triumphs among our own kind is self-comforting and joyous. But it also can become self-defeating for an interdisciplinary field of study to defensively remove itself from strengthening ties with related fields.

An example is what has happened with our relationship with NCTE and 4C's. The NCTE Committee on Technical and Scientific Communication was begun at least twenty years ago by Herman Estrin of the New Jersey Institute of Technology. Its goal was to establish a place for Technical Communication in the

professional community of English teachers. The development of a positive image was helped along by the tireless efforts of people like Nell Ann Pickett, Don Cunningham, Paul Anderson, and Virginia Book who used their own connections with NCTE in other contexts to open the door for us. Years later, it was decided that there should also be a 4C's Technical Communication committee since it was this convention that specifically concerned itself with issues of writing and communication on the college level. The NCTE Committee made significant strides in establishing a positive image for Technical Communication. We established awards for Technical Communication publications; we publish a bibliography; we review proposed publications on Technical Communication for the NCTE Publications Committee; we sponsor a yearly pre- or post-convention seminar for beginning or advanced H.S. and college teachers in Technical Communication.

Unfortunately, this once thriving committee is now in serious danger of self-destructing. Why? In the first place, most of the active members of the committee no longer have any reason to go to the annual NCTE Convention except for the committee meeting. With travel money limited, members have had to make unpleasant decisions about participation. Last year, the overburdened chair did not even call a meeting and has recently resigned as chair. This years as associate chair I will be temporarily performing the duties of chair. The publications, awards, workshop and bibliography functions of the committee are in place for now thanks to a few established members of the

profession who are volunteering their time and their own money to keep us afloat. Needless to say our image with NCTE has been jeopardized.

The 4C's Committee and the NCTE Committee despite the fact that some of the same people serve in both groups have been unable to cooperate on ambitious, necessary activities. They have gotten bogged down in questions of which committee should do what. Perhaps the worst consequence is that after several years of talk by both committees, we still do not have policy statements that would help clarify who and what we are for English departments, chairs of the annual 4C's convention and other persons and groups who need this information as much as we need to make it available to them.

One result, of course, is our ongoing problem with 4C's: the difficulty in getting our papers and panels evaluated by an informed source. This year the chair was understandably impressed with the outstanding quality of the proposals in our field. Unfortunately, however, persons unknown had led her to believe that 4C's is not an important meeting place for Technical Communication teachers and scholars and that their major convention is ITCC. Acting on his information, she felt confident in limiting the number of Technical Communication panels, despite their high quality, in order to accommodate areas of study for whom 4C's was a major convention. An established member of our profession inadvertently discovered this erroneous perception and patiently explained that 4C's was indeed our major convention, whereas ITCC was an industrial gathering for

professional writers, not academically oriented and too expensive for most technical writing teachers to attend. Unfortunately, the explanations came too late, and next year we will have to start all over with another chair equally receptive to misconceptions.

The thrust back and forth from co-dependency to stubborn insularity is also keeping a donkey on our back in the English departments in which most of us function. The truth is that the situation I and many of my colleagues faced when coming up for tenure in the early 80's has not really appreciably improved. With rare though significant exceptions, English departments still do not understand technical writing; fear its job-oriented and/or its interdisciplinary leanings; and exploit and overwork those who teach it. When tenure or promotion decisions must be made, chairs and P&B committees are confronted with the discomfort of their own ignorance and try to fit the work of their Technical Communication colleagues into evaluation modes they understand, into judgments that require the least possible efforts. Parallel misunderstandings color evaluations and hiring/tenure decisions in rhetoric and engineering departments as well, although the specific issues are different.

That is why I am concerned about the kind of thinking represented by William E. Rivers, a technical writing teacher at the University of South Carolina in an article in JBTC entitled "Qualities English Departments Prefer for New Teachers of Business and Technical Writing: Is It Time to Reaccess our Degree Programs?" To summarize very briefly, Rivers sent a

survey to 915 two-year and four-year colleges and university English departments designed to describe their qualifications for new hires in technical and business writing. 62% or 586 departments answered the survey; 128 of these were actually planning to hire one or more new faculty in business/technical communication. He provides data divided by type of institution and by those presently not hiring as opposed to those planning to hire soon; but for our purposes today I will just give you the key percentages for all the institutions that responded. Of all 568, 57.1% prefer a traditional literature degree with a strong formal graduate component in Composition; 45.4% preferred a Rhetoric/Composition Ph.D. with a strong component in literature; 61.8% would like their new hires to also have teaching experience in business and technical writing; only 36.8% wanted experience in business and industry and the majority of these were two-year colleges. Many of the four-year respondents feared a technocratic invasion of the humanities.

These facts and the rest of the data in this study are very valuable. What worries me is the point-of-view that Rivers expresses about them and the recommendations he makes based on these figures. He uses his results to demonstrate that the majority who have hired or intend to hire technical/business writing teachers prefer someone with a dual degree in Literature and in Composition/Rhetoric who in addition has already had experience in teaching technical/business writing.

In classic co-dependent fashion, Rivers goes on to say that we should use this information to prepare our students to meet the desired qualifications. How? By creating a specialized "hybrid" degree (donkeys and asses again please note) a hybrid degree in which the English graduate student does all the work required for a Literature degree; most of the work for a Composition degree, and, oh, yes, tries to teach some technical writing classes on the side. This person's education will take a couple of years more than the standard English Ph.D., although it will not result in any increase in pay or recognition. Instead, it will provide formal training for the schizophrenic, cameleon-like life that most of us currently lead and further confirm in the minds of chairs, P&B committees, and administrators that Technical Communication in itself is not an acceptable, tenurable specialization; it has no character or validity of its own. It is a donkey that must be carried on the backs of both an established, grandfatherly discipline, English Literature, and a young emerging discipline -- Composition.

Are we seriously to adapt our courses and programs to the uninformed easy compromises of traditional English professors?. Shouldn't we instead take the initiative to educate the people who hold our careers and the careers of those who follow us in thier hands? Shouldn't we be providing the information they need to incorporate Technical Communication into Humanities, English, or Rhetoric departments instead of trying to produce graduate

contortionists who will fit in through some extraordinary combination of skills that would never be required of anybody else?

Are we going to let others tell us how to ride our donkey? Others who are less experienced than we are at riding it? Are we going to carry the burden of hybrids conceived by others?

My answer is no! I believe we are strong enough now to begin to take charge of who we are and how we are perceived and to proclaim a place for ourselves both as an autonomous and as an integrative field of study. We have two tasks ahead of us, one of which we are working on at this annual meeting. We need to agree on what instruction and programs and research and degrees in technical writing and technical communication are -- on what we do and how we do it. The next step is equally vital: we need to tell everybody else who needs or wants to know -- the departments we work in, the organizations who hire our graduates, the professional groups such as 4C's and NCTE in which we want to be central participants and from whom we want support. We can do so by preparing and issuing articles, pamphlets, videos that educate people in what Technical Communication is, what Technical Communication research is, how to evaluate writers and teachers, what relationship we have or might have to other fields, and so on.

This means that everyone in CPTSC must participate. The proposed constitution and the proposed expanded executive committee and slate of officers you will vote on tomorrow is designed to foster the kind of community effort which will

benefit us all. We propose an eight-member executive committee with more fairly distributed and clearly defined responsibilities. Each executive committee member will have specific projects and will be encouraged to involve other CPTSC members equally in accomplishing each of the smaller tasks necessary to complete a major endeavor. If I may borrow from the imagery of Jesse Jackson, the best and the quickest way to make quilts is for each of us to sew on at least one patch.

I'm not naive. I know we won't get others to accept our image just by presenting it to them -- even though we will present it well. But I do believe in gradual, excalating change because I have seen people make it happen in the creation and adaptation of individual programs and in the creation and adaptation of organizations like CPTSC -- I do believe and ask you to believe that if you plant enough healthy seeds, you eventually create a tree and possibly even a forest.

I challenge the members of CPTSC to enter the future assertively. I challenge you and leave you with these words from the ancient philosopher, Hillel:

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
If I am only for myself, what am I?
If not now, when?

Report from the Discussion Group on Technical Communication Service Programs

Donald H. Cunningham

Six persons participated in the discussion group: Virginia A. Book, Laura E. Casari, and Gary Parsons of the University of Nebraska; Kenneth T. Ramey of Memphis State University; Maxine Turner of Georgia Institute of Technology; and Donald H. Cunningham of Texas Tech University.

We began by compiling a list of approximately a dozen questions and problems related to administering and teaching technical communication service courses and then decided, in view of the limited amount of time, to concentrate on four for discussion.

1. Preventing Faculty Burnout. At some institutions (the University of Nebraska, for instance) where faculty teach only sections of the same service course year after year, there is the potential for faculty burnout. We wonder how extensive this situation is and whether hiring tenure-track faculty to teach repetitively only one course is unwise and improper. Several suggestions were offered on how to help prevent faculty burnout under these conditions:

* Faculty should consider changing the syllabus occasionally to vary the kinds of assignments: collaborative

assignments, case studies, and special research projects could be used in addition to or instead of traditional exercises and assignments.

* Faculty should investigate the possibility of introducing additional courses, such as an advanced or specialized course in proposal or manual writing, writing for publication, or editing.

* Faculty should study the feasibility of developing an undergraduate or graduate professional program that would establish several new courses.

* Faculty should investigate the possibility of changing the format of the course. An example might be to collaboratively teach a large section with teaching assistants who are not, as a rule, English majors but persons with technical backgrounds and writing experience at work.

2. Maintaining Quality in Service Programs. Burnout of faculty who repetitively teach the same course year after year is only one threat to the quality of the service program. It may also be difficult to maintain quality when an energetic and ambitious faculty have the opportunity to develop a professional program. As the professional program develops, the faculty; who made the service program so successful, are pulled out of it to

teach in the professional programs, and less qualified and less experienced faculty assume the responsibility of teaching the service courses. We must guard against the possibility that the service program may go the way of many freshman composition programs, which tend to be handled by one or two tenure-track faculty supervising a bunch of teaching assistants and part-time faculty. Two suggestions for maintaining quality under these conditions were offered:

* Faculty and administrators should develop a training and mentoring system to prepare teaching assistants and part-time faculty who teach the service courses.

* Administrators might establish a fairly prescriptive and uniform syllabus for teaching assistants and part-time faculty to adhere to. However, regular tenure-track faculty may be allowed some latitude in teaching the service course.

3. **Addressing the Needs of International Students.** Many programs--especially in engineering, science, and mathematics--have large enrollments of international students who take the service course to "learn more English." In such institutions there is the potential problem of the service course becoming a "fix it" course that gives hordes of international students another course in the study of the English language. To prevent the service course from becoming the dumping ground for

international students to brush up on their English, two suggestions were offered:

* Faculty and administration should communicate to engineering, science, and mathematics administrators and advisors that the service is not an appropriate substitution for an ESL course.

* If feasible, the faculty might develop special ESL sections of the service course, and administrators hire faculty who are qualified to teach both technical communication and ESL courses.

4. **Clarifying the Relationship of CPTSC to Service Programs and Teachers of Service Courses.** Although CPTSC is open to persons who administer or teach in service programs, its primary mission and the interests of most of its members appear to be concerned with the larger issues of developing professional programs. It is noticeable that only six of the forty persons attending this conference chose to participate in the service program discussion group. We believe that CPTSC should become more concerned with the needs of service courses for these reasons: virtually all faculty who administer or teach professional courses gained their experience by teaching service courses; most textbooks are derived from and are designed for service courses; many of the ideas and concepts about technical communication originate in the service courses. In addition,

since the vast majority of students who study technical communication only enroll in a service course, we need to improve our techniques for teaching them effectively. Two suggestions were offered:

* Faculty who teach primarily specialized courses in a professional program should also continue to teach service courses and to stay in contact with engineering, science, and business disciplines.

* CPTSC should do more than merely allow technical communication teachers to join the organization. It must clarify its relationship to service programs and to the teachers of service courses.

THE CERTIFICATE IN TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

The Certificate: A Definition

A certificate is a college or university awarded credential granted for successful completion of a defined program of study. Certificates can be awarded at the undergraduate or the graduate level.

A Technical Communication Certificate differs from a Masters Degree in two significant ways. First, a Masters program will require more credit hours and, therefore, a longer period of study. A Masters program will also promote more research into the study of the theory of technical communication. The limited scope of the Certificate in Technical Communication distinguishes it from the undergraduate degree in this area.

Curriculum

The curriculum of a Certificate in Technical Communication should combine theory and practice, with practice more heavily weighted. Theory might focus on such topics as the use and placement of graphics within text. Practice should include demonstrable skill in composing technical documents.

All curriculum for Certificate programs should include instruction in the following areas:

* Writing skills with emphasis on audience analysis. (At least 50% of the curriculum.)
* Visuals and graphics skills.

* Information gathering skills in technical areas. (Can include traditional print research methods, interviews, and surveys.)
* Speaking, listening, and small group communication skills.

Curriculum for Certificate may also include technical content knowledge, either taught in the curriculum or awarded credit by exemption for experimental knowledge.

Quality of Instruction

The quality of instruction is an important factor in evaluating a Certificate Program. When evaluating instructional quality, the Technical Communication staff should consider the number of faculty whose major area is Technical Communication versus the number of part-time faculty teaching in the Certificate Program. Evaluations of faculty by peers and by students should be included. In addition, a survey of the attitudes of the staff towards the teaching of technical writing is an important element.

Recommendation

We recommend a nationwide survey to gather information on the content of existing Certificate programs. In addition, we recommend that CPTSC survey the number of full-time to part-time to adjunct faculty teaching in Certificate Programs in Technical Communication to establish a standard for an appropriate ratio.

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Summary Reporter: Katherine Staples, Austin Community College

Susan Feinberg, Illinois Institute of Technology

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Report from the Undergraduate Caucus at the CPTSC October, 1988 Conference, in Minneapolis.

The undergraduate caucus discussed thirteen questions generated from the questionnaire portion of conference participants' registration forms. Questions ranged from how to set up and evaluate undergraduate internships to what kind and how many technical courses should be required of a technical communication major. Nine people participated in the caucus discussion: Nancy MacKenzie from Mankato State, Larry Shamus from IBM San Jose, Tom Pearsall from the University of Minnesota, Sandy Pfeiffer from Southern College of Technology, Andy Kantor from Ferris State, Gloria Jaffe from the University of Central Florida, the caucus leader, and Mary Lay from Clarkson University, the summary recorder. Jim Corey and Andy Kantor have submitted two additional position statements which follow this summary.

When caucus participants described their existing or envisioned undergraduate programs, we discovered that the programs were not as diverse as expected. For example, most undergraduate programs require a number of hours in the traditional liberal studies as well as an internship or co-op experience and a concentration of math, science, and computer courses.

After these preliminary descriptions and discussion, the caucus focused on seven central questions or problems and speculated about possible solutions and approaches.

1. Caucus participants shared a common need to establish credibility for what should and should not be included within a technical communication curriculum and to retain control over their own programs. Contacting alumni/ae about on-the-job skills and requirements, obtaining descriptions of other undergraduate technical communication programs, and maintaining contacts with industry to assess their needs (through such devises as a "board of advisors") were some of the strategies suggested to establish credibility with administrators and colleagues.

2. Selection and recruitment of high school seniors provided a challenge to most caucus participants. The process of educating high school students about the career opportunities in technical communication and selecting and screening internal transfers or applicants to the program was a shared burden. Caucus participants had a number of strategies, which included the following: offering pre-major or introductory courses within the freshman and sophomore years; inviting high school students to on-site industry visits to view technical writers at work; speaking at local meetings of the National Council of Teachers of English; establishing relationships with guidance counselors at high schools and junior colleges; identifying and contacting gifted and talented young students to offer "fast track" or

preferential treatment upon applying to a program; and contacting high school students with high SAT English scores.

3. Caucus participants discussed the value of maintaining alumni/ae contacts to see how former students were doing on the job, to solicit suggestions about the curriculum, and to provide job contacts for future alumni/ae. Strategies for maintaining this contact included STC newsletters from local or student chapters and contacts at national conferences such as the ITCC. Participants expressed concern that program directors assess whether we were "educating" the "whole person" within our programs or merely training in selected skills.

4. In general, caucus participants gave high priority to technical courses within an undergraduate program. Courses in math, science, and computer science were a "given," while advanced courses in engineering and computer science were highly desirable. Technical communication students need to acquire a "technical vocabulary" and learn to function within a technical environment. However, caucus participants recognized the difficulty students encountered in "finding" technical courses in other curricula, in meeting the pre-requisites from these courses, and in competing with technical majors within the courses. Students might be given the opportunity to take these courses pass/no entry, pass/fail, or satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

5. When discussing how much "theory" and how much "application"

technical communications majors should have, participants acknowledged that undergraduate students often do not appreciate the theoretical aspects of their education, but that industry assumes that they come to the job with theoretical skills. IBM, San Jose, for example, gives a "logic" test to potential information developers to assess their technical ability but again assumes that students know the theoretical assumptions behind effective communication.

6. When discussing the preponderance of writing courses within most undergraduate programs, caucus participants agreed that courses in oral communication, graphics, and even such specialized skills as interviewing should be added to the technical communication curriculum. As a means of upgrading or adding new courses, some program directors use the rubric of "special topics." In particular, instead of adding courses in such task-oriented or perhaps temporary subjects as desktop publishing, courses in "alternative media" or "uses of technology in communication" seemed a viable approach.

7. Some caucus participants expressed concern that while industrial contacts with the computer industry were flourishing, students who wanted jobs in corporate or public relations or business communication areas received less attention. Again alumni/ae contacts and professional conferences might provide contact with future employers.

In general, participants in the undergraduate caucus agreed that technical communication administrators and teachers were doing an excellent job on the undergraduate level. In four years' time, we could expose students to a number of technical courses, require internships, and offer a wide selection of writing, speaking, and graphics courses. Frequently when students from other disciplines enter a graduate technical communication program, they must acquire the necessary undergraduate communication and technical courses before they can begin earning credit in their graduate programs. In the last ten years, we have moved from seeking accreditation for our undergraduate programs to setting standards for any new programs in the field. Undergraduate caucus participants also suggested using the discussion format at the 1989 CPTSC to consider a number of other specific concerns, such as what standards should be used to evaluate technical communication faculty for promotion and tenure and what research and pedagogical methods technical communication faculty might share.

Technical Writing Graduate Programs: What Skills Should We Be Developing?

Carol S. Lipson

Writing Program, Syracuse University

Summary Report of the 1988 Graduate Workshop Session

The Graduate Workshop at the 1988 meeting focused, not surprisingly, on questions raised by the morning keynote speaker on graduate programs -- Billie Wahlstrom -- and on issues identified by the discussion at the 1987 meeting in Orlando. One of the major topics involved distinctions and relationships between BA, BS, MA, MS, and PhD programs in technical communication. Another involved the titles of the programs: Technical Writing, Technical Communication, Professional Writing, Rhetoric and Communication, etc. Questions were also raised about how to choose appropriate graduate students, and about how to handle their remedial needs.

In dealing with the first question, as to differences between undergraduate and graduate programs, individual members began by articulating their own senses of the distinctions. Several felt the masters level programs should offer a more theoretical perspective than would undergraduate programs. That is, while bachelors-level students might learn to understand the principles underlying the communication of technical material, and to apply these principles competently, the

masters students should move beyond this to also develop an understanding of the research underlying such principles. According to one participant, the masters students should reach the point of being able to critique research they read. According to another participant, masters students should be able to DO research -- to collect and argue from data appropriately. Examples offered included observational research, as well as protocols, surveys, and interviews -- all suitable for deployment in usability testing.

Questions then arose as to distinctions in research needs for masters and doctoral students. The group didn't begin to delve into this issue, but focused its limited time on looking into suitable goals for the bachelors and masters levels. Glenn Broadhead offered to collect a data base, to be put on line at Iowa State, of courses offered now at the BA and MA levels in current degree programs. He proposed to collect syllabi to supplement catalog course descriptions, in order to get a sense of the skills that individual courses might be focusing on.

To complement this effort, Leslie Olsen from the University of Michigan agreed to head up a subcommittee focused on development of a list of the skills that members feel OUGHT to be given attention at each of the two levels -- BA and MA. Leslie's subcommittee would give primary attention to the graduate level, but it was recognized that they might have to begin by focusing on the differences between undergraduate and graduate emphases. Leslie's group would then bring the results of their deliberations back to the full CPTSC membership at a future annual meeting. While Glenn's work will provide detailed information on what

is now being done, Leslie's committee will move to consideration of the ideal goals -- what ought to be done. Both types of analysis will be valuable in order for the field to develop recommendations for standards at the different levels.

For the rest of the allotted time, the workshop members began to move toward developing preliminary lists of skills for Leslie's group to work with. The process yielded one list, not two, for as the discussion proceeded, the group could not, in fact, isolate skills it felt belonged at the graduate level and not the undergraduate level, or vice versa. The discussion yielded a general sense that all the skills listed should be addressed at both levels, but with different expectations for the degree of understanding and for the depth and sophistication of attention received.

Here's the list that arose in the deliberations at this workshop:

1. Ability to design, execute, revise, and assess texts on technical subjects (with text being understood as more than just print) for instructional, persuasive, and communicative purposes.

2. Ability to work collaboratively.

3. Ability to conduct empirical research, such as for usability testing. Includes observational methods, protocols, surveys, and interviewing.

4. Ability to understand major historical developments in the field.

5. Ability to distinguish appropriate use of different media -- visual, oral, and print. Includes explicit rhetorical theoretical understanding for all media.

6. Competence in handling major communication technologies, eg. hypertext and desktop publishing.

7. Understanding of ethical and legal dimensions of the field.

8. Ability to understand the workings of organizational environments. Eg. rhetoric of organizational structures and cultures.

9. Ability to function in workplace situations, as demonstrated in internships.

That's as far as the group got, given the time limitations. One can see that most of these focuses could involve a separate course, which might mean that 6 or 7 slots of an 8-course BA major or of a 12-course MA program are hereby defined. And we have to consider that this group may well have overlooked topics or skills that other members of CPTSC might consider major omissions. If possible, members should try to communicate such information and related opinions to Leslie Olsen

before the 1990 meeting in San Diego.

Reflective Commentary

One of the things I found gratifying in this discussion was a sense that the field should not be bound by what has become conventional in existing degree programs, so that these would become normative for future efforts. Instead, there was a strong sense of the need to go back to first principles, to reconsider what it means to do technical writing in a workplace environment, based on feedback we receive from former students, from our own experience as consultants, as well as from our perspectives as scholars. I cite this as gratifying not because I am intensely dissatisfied with the major BA or MA programs in existence, but because I am uncomfortable in principle with prescription. I believe we would simply stifle our field if we create conditions in which programs would be considered deviant or substandard if they did not follow the common mold. We would, additionally, be moving against the compelling intellectual current prevailing in the humanities if we simply create a canon of courses that must appear for a program to be deemed kosher and to be given the stamp of approval by a review body.

Instead, the workshop group attempted to identify outcomes that different programs could approach in different manners. While the understanding was that all 9 skills and focuses identified should receive attention in all programs, there was no sense that each program needed to give the same amount of attention to each, that each item

required a full separate course, or that different programs could not concentrate on certain subsets or focuses within the list.

Some Potential Pitfalls

One of the clear dangers of tying goals of a program with the attainment of skills is that each skill might be taken as a discrete entity, taught and tested separately. One could imagine, in a worst-case scenario, that some schools might begin giving exit tests of the separate skills to certify the students' abilities. One could envision such a school breaking up the curriculum into separate two-week bits, in which each bit teaches to its test. One two-week period might then teach collaborative skills. Another one might teach rhetorical theory. A discrete unit might focus on theory and practice of visual media. Another might focus on revising and editing text.

In this worst-case scenario, the curriculum might never pull the isolated skills and focuses together to provide for a holistic sense of the production and use of technical discourse, except perhaps through an internship in the final semester. Such a scenario troubles me, because it denies the complexity of writing. It would ill serve students as preparation for careers as writers, where they need to juggle all skills and perspectives virtually simultaneously, right from the start.

I'm not arguing that we should abandon the organization of pedagogy into 3 or 4-credit course units, or that we should not offer intensive attention to the skills and topics identified by the group. What I am

arguing against is a reductionism that divides student attention into minute separate units and that does not enable sufficient consideration of the complex interaction of the parts in a whole. I am arguing against allowing oversimplification of our curriculum and pedagogy.

Another concern I have, which was widely shared in the workshop group discussion, is the sense that a masters program may frequently not be very different from a bachelors program. This is an issue that the field has to address openly. I myself have spoken with BA graduates who report that their pay and promotability would improve with a masters behind them; yet after looking into several masters programs, they find some of these programs unsuitably introductory for their needs and background. Ironically, though our field is communication, we communicate poorly in the titles of our graduate degree programs. We offer no indication in the titles as to which might build upon undergraduate technical communication foundations, or which might instead offer coverage and depth basically similar to that at the undergraduate level, geared for students who have an undergraduate degree in another field.

Some suggestions have been put forth that we model our graduate degrees on the MBA approach, which does not assume a bachelors in business and which handles the varieties of incoming backgrounds by requiring courses upon completion of which formal entrance to the program begins. That is, the required courses are technically not watered down to the bachelors level to accomodate students with no background in the field.

We might indeed locate some solutions for our current dilemma by looking to other fields with similar situations. We can also locate some cautions from observing fields that have faced situations similar to ours. In fact, the MBA model reveals some dangers for us to avoid. In the 50s, management schools relied primarily on analysis of representative case histories in educating students at the graduate level (Pfeffer, 351-352). The Gordon and Howell report of 1959 criticized the looseness and the commonsense basis of this approach, and the lack of a theoretical base in such a method of graduate study. The report led to a profound change in curriculum. MBA programs now devote primary attention to technical skills and methodologies, such as statistical skills and methods of economic analysis, optimization methods, computer analyses -- all methods that are measurable and discrete and that require special training. Yet the new quantified, research-based curriculum ill prepares managers for the roles they will play and the skills they will actually require. As Pfeffer argues, organizations are characterized by uncertainty and conflict, by political maneuverings (p. 354). As Zuboff claims, "the manager's world is an interpersonal vortex of relentless demands" from others (p. 323). Yet the MBA education generally does not prepare students for these crucial dimensions of a manager's role. Frequently even the addition of possible rhetorical training into the curriculum is handled as an optional or remedial element; Pfeffer cites Berkeley, Stanford, and Carnegie Mellon as having included writing and speaking units on a non-credit, remedial basis (p. 355). As such as future managers might benefit by in-depth understanding of principles of advocacy, power, politics, and the use of symbolic acts of language, such elements are

rare indeed as central elements of MBA programs.

The point is not just that MBA programs are misguided; we should try to learn from the MBA situation. In an attempt to confer academic legitimacy to the graduate programs, and professional legitimacy to the group known as managers, the business academic field created a canon of highly specialized rational skills which all students must acquire. Such a curriculum gives a picture of management practice as scientific, as requiring particular expertise, and as far removed from the ordinary 'common' human abilities of understanding human nature and human behavior, as well as social and cultural and political effects. Yet as Johnston points out, a manager's "movement into middle management is contingent on mastery of the company's internal world and ... social and political environment" (p. 108). And "as managers move from middle to senior levels, they are increasingly called upon to read -- and to shape -- the company social and political environment" (p. 94). So too, I would suggest, must technical communicators. We must beware that our lists of skills do not omit or ignore these crucial interpretive, social, cultural, and political abilities and understandings, to focus purely on text or purely on methodologies and techniques and specialized skills.

In the field of technical communication, we see concern now to raise the levels of our graduate and undergraduate programs. People speak of setting standards for coverage and focus for different types of degrees, and of establishing mechanisms for evaluating programs according to these standards. There's talk of upgrading the quality.

All of this is both inevitable and necessary at the current stage of our development as a field. But I wish to caution against locking us in. I would not want to see our field trapped in a specialized professional model of education such as is characteristic of MBA programs, trapped in the concept of elite specialized skills. Furthermore, we should be careful not to establish structures that might put in jeopardy a new program that develops an entirely new way of thinking about what it means to prepare undergraduate and graduate students to function in this field, if that program can provide compelling intellectual justification. Such a program should not find itself receiving a negative review because it does not meet a set of rigid guidelines. Whatever guidelines we provide must be flexible, to allow for and enable growth and change in a relatively new and burgeoning academic field.

In sum, we should learn from MBA programs not to take a narrow definition of specialized skills as our foundation, not to trivialize the concept of skill or ability to purely behavioristic dimensions. Our work in rethinking our curriculum is yet at early stages, and would benefit from broad discussion and feedback. I would urge readers to transmit ideas and opinions to Leslie Olsen, for the benefit of her task force, which will begin to put together a more developed sense of the goals appropriate for the undergraduate and graduate levels for future discussion.

A Personal Note:

I am writing this report on the 1988 workshop in October 1989. Many readers will know, as a result of the announcement I made at the 1989 meeting, that my notes from the 1988 workshop were lost for over a year. I put in a public plea for others to send me their notes, if they could locate any. None arrived, but mine were fortunately resurrected. They had gotten mixed up with my husband's files, and were hidden in constantly accumulating piles of stuff that had to wait over a year for his clean-up attention. Fortunately, the story has a happy ending.

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Minutes

CPTSC
15th Annual Business Meeting
October 21, 1988
Minneapolis, Minnesota

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 A.M. by President Marilyn Samuels. She thanked the committee from the University of Minnesota for hosting the conference.

Ms. Samuels announced that the special issue of the *Technical Writing Teacher* devoted to **CPTSC** will be published in June 1990 and articles from **CPTSC** would be welcomed.

1. Secretary's Report

Sandy Pfeiffer moved to suspend reading of the minutes; Simon Johnson seconded the motion.

2. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's report (attached) accepted. Motion made by Dan Riordan: Simon Johnson seconded.

3. Constitution

Amendments and revisions to the Constitution discussed and accepted as noted on attached revised Constitution.

4. Membership

Membership in **CPTSC** runs from January to December. Notices of membership dues are to be sent out in January of each year by the treasurer

5. Conference Site

The 1989 Conference will be held October 12, 13, 14 in Rochester N.Y. at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Host will be Bruce Austin. Days of the conference were changed to Thursday, Friday and Saturday for the convenience of the membership.

6. Election

Before elections were held, discussion of ballot form and voting procedures took place. The revised Constitution addresses these subjects.

Elected

• President:	Marilyn Schauer Samuels
• Vice-President:	Gloria W. Jaffe
• Secretary:	William "Sandy" Pfeiffer
• Treasurer:	Carol Lipson
• Members at Large:	Laurie S. Hayes
	Billie J. Wahlstrom
	James Zappen

7. Newsletter

The spring newsletter will go out sometime in April with announcements of forthcoming activities of **CPTSC.**

8. *Proceedings*

Material for 1988 *Proceedings* should be sent to Gloria Jaffe, at the University of Central Florida, by February 1, 1989.

1987 *Proceedings* should be out to the membership very soon.

Financial Report

CPTSC
October 15, 1988

Credits

Balance brought forward on 9/9/87	**$3256.97**
Memberships	
1987--21	
1988--74 (8 new members)	1425.00
Mailing labels	7.00
Sale of *Proceedings*	72.00
Orlando meeting	1099.50
Interest (6/27/86–12/31/87)	168.25
Subtotal–credits	$2771.75

Debits

Proceedings 1986 (production and distribution)	728.74
Expenditures for 1987 meeting	1696.34
Membership mailing	18.26
Newsletter	123.22
Hospitality	150.67
Executive committee meeting in Cleveland	500.00
Subtotal-debits	$3217.23

Balance–10/15/88 **$2811.49**

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea C. Walter

Treasurer

Appendix A

List of Pre-registered Conferees To The Fifteenth Annual **CPTSC** Meeting

Bruce Austin
Rochester Institute of Technology
40 Selborne Chase
Fairport, NY 14450

Carol Barnum
Humanities
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(402) 472-3034

Laura E. Casari
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Susan Feinberg
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Sam C. Geonetta
College of Applied Science
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Laurie Hayes
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Appendix B

CPTSC Annual Meetings, Sites, and Dates

1st	University of Minnesota	St. Paul, MN	1974
2nd	Boston University	Boston, MA	1975
3rd	Colorado State University	Fort Collins, CO	1976
4th	University of Minnesota	St. Paul, MN	1977
5th	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Troy, NY	1978
6th	Oklahoma State University	Stillwater, OK	1979
7th	University of Central Florida	Orlando, FL	1980
8th	University of Washington	Seattle, WA	1981
9th	Carnegie-Mellon University	Pittsburgh, PA	1982
10th	University of Nebraska	Lincoln, NE	1983
11th	La Fonda	Santa Fe, NM	1984
12th	Miami University	Oxford, OH	1985
13th	Clark Community College	Portland, OR Vancouver, WA	1986
14th	University of Central Florida	Orlando, FL	1987
15th	University of Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN	1988

Appendix C

1988 **CPTSC** Officers

President:	Marilyn Schauer Samuels	Case Western Reserve University
Vice President:	Sam C. Geonetta	University of Missouri–Rolla
Treasurer:	Gloria W. Jaffe	University of Central Florida
Secretary:	Andrea Corcoran Walter	Rochester Institute of Technology
Member at Large:	Carol Lipson	Syracuse University